THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. But the decision was taken in consultation with some countries.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

High Level Inter Ministerial Team to Moscow

1588. SHRI VIJAY NAVIL PATIL:
SHRI CHITTA BASU:
SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high-level inter-ministerial team headed by the Foreign Secretary had visited Moscow to discuss bilateral issues; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Yes, Sir, in mid-January, 1992.

(b) The team held extensive discussions with its Russian counterparts on different aspects of bilateral cooperation with a view to defining new parameters for structuring bilateral cooperation between the Russian Federation and India in the context of the changes which occured in the former USSR. Discussions covered Economic, Technological, Defence and Political aspects of bilateral relations. They were useful.

[*Translation*]

Assistance to Pineapple Growers

1589. SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether pineapple growers of North-Eastern States are facing great difficulties due to increase in cost of production and non-availability of marketing facility;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) the steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government to help these pineapple growers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The Ministry has not received any report from the Governments of the North-Eastern States regarding difficulties due to increase in cost of production and non-availability of marketing facilities for pineapple.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) (i) Government of India through the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) and National Horticulture Board (NHB) is strengthening market infrastructure for marketing the horticulture produce including pineapple.

(ii) Government of India is also implementing Market Intervention Scheme on the request of State Governments to assist pineapple growers at the time of glut in the market. During June-July,1990 National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) procured 12.20 metric tonnes of pineapple @ Rs. 70/- per Kg.

(iii) The North-Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd. (NERAMAC) has already set up a concentrate plant in Tripura for pineapple processig to utilise surplus produce.